

### III. *A Continuation of Mr. John Clayton's Account of Virginia.*

#### *Of the Beasts of Virginia.*

**T**H E R E were neither Horses, Bulls, Cows, Sheep, or Swine, in all the Country, before the coming of the *English*, as I have heard, and have much reason to believe. But now amongst the *English* Inhabitants there are good store of Horses, though they are very negligent and careless about the Breed: It is true, there is a Law, that no Horse shall be kept stoned under a certain size, but it is not put in Execution. Such as they are, there are good store, and as cheap or cheaper than in *England*, worth about Five Pounds apiece. They never Shoe them, nor Stable them in general; some few Gentlemen may be something more Curious, but it is very rare; yet they Ride pretty sharply, a Planter's Pace is a Proverb, which is a good sharp Hand-Gallop. The *Indians* have not yet learned to Ride, only the King of *Pomonkie* had got three or four Horses for his own Saddle, and an Attendant, which I think should in no wise be indulged, for I look on the allowing them Horses much more dangerous than even Guns and Powder.

*See Philos.  
Transact.  
Numb. 201  
205, 206.*

*Wild Bulls* and *Cows* there are now in the uninhabited Parts, but such only as have been bred from some that have strayed, and become Wild, and have propagated their kind, and are difficult to be shot, having a great Acuteness of Smelling. The Common Rate of a Cow and Calf, is 50 s. fight unseen, be she big or little, they are never very Curious to Examine that Point.

Their *Sheep* are of a midling size, pretty fine fleeced in general, and most Persons of Estate begin to keep

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Flocks;

Flocks, which hitherto has not been much regarded, because of the Wolves that destroy them; so that a piece of Mutton is a finer Treat, than either Venison, Wild-Goose, Duck, Widgeon, or Teal.

*Elke*, I have heard of them beyond the Inhabitants, and that there was one presented to Sir *William Berkley*, which he sometime kept.

*Deer*, there are abundance of brave Red Deer, so that a good Woodsman, as they call them, will keep a House with Venison; the *Indians*, they say, make Artificial forts of Heads of Boughs of Trees, which they Consecrate to their Gods, and these they put on to deceive the Deer when they go a Shooting, or Hunting, as they call it, and by mimiking the feeding of the Deer, they by degrees get within Shot.

*Swine*, they have now in great abundance, Shoats, or Porkrels are their general Food; and I believe as good as any *Westphalia*, certainly far exceeding our *English*.

*Rackoone*, I take it to be a Species of a Monkey, something less than a Fox, gray-hair'd, its Feet formed like a Hand, and the Face too has likewise the resemblance of a Monkeys, besides being kept tame, they are very Apish: They are very prejudicial to their Poultry, as I remember.

An *Opossum*, as big, and something shaped like our Badgers, but of a lighter Dun colour, with a long Tail something like a Rat, but as thick as a Man's Thumb; the Skin of its Belly is very large, and folded so as to meet like a Purse, wherein they secure their Young whilst little and tender, which will as naturally run thither, as Chickens to a Hen; in these false Bellies they will carry their Young; these also feed on, and devour Corn.

*Hares*, many will have them to be a Hedge-Rabbit, but I know not what they mean thereby. I take them to be a perfect Species of Hares, because I have seen  
Leverets

**Leverets** there with the white spot in the Head, which the Old ones have not, so it is in *England*; and the Down is perfectly of the colour of our Hares, they sit as our Hares do, and make no Holes and Burrows in the Earth; true, they are but about the bigness of an *English* Rabbet, and run no faster; they generally take into some hollow Tree within a little space, which then the People catch by gathering the withered Leaves, and setting them on fire within the hollow of the Tree, and smoaking of them so till they fall down. Sometimes they take long Bryars, and twist them in the Down and Skin, and so pull them forth.

*Squirrels*, there are three sorts. The first is the great Fox Squirrel, much larger than the *English*, and gray, almost as a common Rabbet. These are very common, I have eaten of them at the best Gentlemens Tables, and they are as good as a Rabbet. The Second is the Flying Squirrel, of a lighter Dun colour, and much less than the *English* Squirrel; the Skin on either side the Belly extended is very large betwixt the fore-leg and hind-leg, which helps them much in their skipping from one Bough to another, that they will leap farther than the Fox-Squirrel, though much less; yet this is still rather skipping than flying, though the distinction be well enough. The Third is the Ground-Squirrel, I never saw any of this sort, only I have been told of them, and have had them thus described to me, to be little bigger than a Mouse, finely spotted like a young Fawn; by what I further apprehended, they are an absolute sort of Dor-Mouse, only different in colour.

*Musk-Rats*, in all things shaped like our Water-Rats, only something larger, and is an absolute Species of Water-Rats, only having a curious Musky scent: I kept one for a certain time in a wooden Chest; two days before it dyed it was extraordinary Odoriferous, and sented the Room very much; but the day that it dyed, and a day

after the scent was very small, yet afterwards the Skin was very fragrant; the Stones also smelt very well. They build Houses as Beavers do, in the Marshes, and Swamps (as they there call them) by the Water-sides, with two or three ways into them, and they are finely daubed within; I pulled one in pieces purposely to see the Contrivance: There were three different Lodging Rooms, very neat, one higher than another, as I conceive purposely made for Retirement, when the Water rises higher than ordinary; they are considerably large, having much Trash and Lumbre to make their Houses withal, I suppose they live mostly on Fish.

*Batts*, as I remember at least two sorts; one a large sort with long Ears, and particularly long stragling hairs. The other much like the *English*, something larger I think, very common.

I never heard of any *Lions*, they told me of a Creature killed whilst I was there, in *Glocester County*, which I conceived to be a sort of Pard, or Tyger.

*Bears* there are, and yet but few in the Inhabited part of *Virginia*; towards *Carolina* there are many more. There was a small Bear killed within three Miles of *James City* the Year that I left the Country, but it was supposed to have strayed, and swam over *James River*. They are not very fierce, their Flesh is commended for a very Rich sort of Pork, but the lying side of the Bear, as I remember, is but half the value of the other, weight for weight.

There are several sorts of *Wild Cats*, and *Poll-Cats*.

*Beavers* build their Houses in like manner as the Musk-Rats do, only much larger, and with pieces of Timber make Dams over Rivers; as I suppose either to preserve their Furs dry in their passage over the Rivers, otherwise to catch Fish by standing to watch them thereon, and jumping upon them on a sudden; they are very subtil Creatures, and if half of the Stories be true  
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that I have been told, they have a very Orderly Government amongst them; in their Works each knows his proper Work, and Station, and the Overseers beat those Young Ones that loiter in their Business, and will make them cry, and work stoutly.

*Wolves* there are great store; you may hear a Company Hunting in an Evening, and yelping like a pack of Beagles; but they are very cowardly, and dare scarce venture on any thing that faces them, yet if Hungry, will pull down a good large Sheep that flies from them. I never heard that any of them adventured to set on Man or Child.

*Foxes*, they are very much like ours, only their Furr is much more grizzled, or gray; neither do I remember ever to have seen any Fox-holes, but of this I am not positive.

Every House keeps three or four Mungrel *Dogs* to destroy Vermin, such as *Wolves*, *Foxes*, *Raccoons*, *Opoffoms*, &c. But they never Hunt with Hounds, I suppose, because there are so many Branches of Rivers, that they cannot follow them. Neither do they keep Grey-Hounds, because they say, that they are subject to break their Necks by running against Trees, and any Cur will serve to run their Hares into a hollow Tree, where after the aforesaid manner they catch them.

They have great store both of Land and Water *Tortoises*, but they are very small, I think I never saw any in that Country to exceed a Foot in length; there is also another sort of Land-Tortoise, different from the common sort, with a higher ridged Back, and speckled with red sort of Spots.

*Frogs* they have of several sorts, one of a Prodigious largeness, Eight or Ten times as big as any in *England*, and it makes a strange noise, something like the Bellowing of a Bull, or betwixt that, and the hollow sounding noise that the *English* Bittern makes.

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Another very common sort, which they call *Toads*, because black, but I think differs nothing from our Black Frog. They have Toads also like ours in *England*; and another small sort of Frog, which makes a noise like Pack-Horse Bells all the Spring long. Another little green Frog, that will leap prodigiously, which they therefore call the Flying Frog. There is frequently heard in the Woods a shrill sort of noise, much like that which our Shrew-Mouse makes, but much sharper; I could never learn the certainty what it was that made this noise, it is generally in a Tree, and some have asserted to me, that it was made by the green Frog, yet I scarcely believe it. Mr. *Banister* assured me it was made by a sort of *Scarabeus* Beetle, that is I think full as big as the Humming-Bird; but neither do I believe that, and for this Reason, for I never saw that Beetle so low as the Salts, but always as high up in the Country as the Freshes, and that noise is frequent all over the Country.

*Lizards*, that are gray, and very common, the Snakes feed much on them, for I have taken several of them out of the bellies of Snakes.

*Snakes* about seven several sorts. The Rattle-Snake, so called from certain Rattles at the end of the Tail; these Rattles seem like so many perished Joynts, being a dry Husk over certain Joynts, and the common Opinion is, that there are as many Rattles or Joynts, as the Snake is Years old; I kill'd four or five, and they had each eleven, twelve, or thirteen Joynts each, but the Young ones have no Rattles of a Year or two, but they may be known notwithstanding, being very regularly diced or checker'd, black, and gray on the backs: The Old shake and shiver these Rattles with wonderful nimbleness when they are any ways disturbed; their bite is very deadly, yet not always of the same force, but more or less Mortal, accordingly as the Snake is in  
force

force or vigour, and therefore in *June* or *July* much worse, and more Mortal, than in *March* and *April*. This Snake is a very Majestick sort of Creature, and will scarce meddle with any thing unless provoked, but if any thing offend it, it makes directly at them. I was told a pleasant Story of an Old Gentleman, Col. *Cleyborn* as I remember was his Name, the same that sent the Rattle-Snakes to the *Royal Society* some Years since. He had an odd Fancy of keeping some of these Snakes always in Barrels in the House, and one time an *Indian* pretending to Charm them so as to take them by the Neck in his hand without biting of him; the Old Gentleman caused a Rattle-Snake to be brought forth, the *Indian* began his Charm with a little Wand, whisking it round and round the Rattle-Snake's Head, bringing it by degrees nigher and nigher, and at length flung the Switch away, and whisked his Han about in like manner, bringing his Hand nigher still and nigher, by taking less Circles, when the Old Gentleman immediately hit the Snake with his Crutch, and the Snake snap'd the *Indian* by the Hand, and bit him very sharply betwixt the Fingers, which put his Charm to an end, and he roared out; but stretch'd his Arm out as high as he could, calling for a string, wherewith he bound his Arm as hard as possibly he could, and clapt a hot burning Coal thereon, and singed it stoutly, whereby he was cured, but looked pale a long while after. And I believe this truly one of the best ways in the World of Curing the Bite either of Viper or Mad Dog. I was with the Honourable Esquire *Boyle*, when he made certain Experiments of Curing the Bite of Vipers, with certain *East-India* Snake-stones, that were sent him by King *James* the Second, the Queen, and some of the Nobility, purposely to have him try their Vertue and Efficacy: For that end he got some brisk Vipers, and made them bite the Thighs of certain Pullets, and the  
Breasts

Breasts of others; he applyed nothing to one of the Pullets, and it dyed within three Minutes and a half, as I remember; but I think they all recovered to which he applyed the Snake-stones, though they turned wonderful pale, their Combs, &c. immediately, and they became extream sick, and purged within half an hour, and the next Morning all their Flesh was turned green to a wonder, nevertheless they recovered by degrees: The manner of the Application was only by laying on the Stone, and by two cross-bits of a very sticking *Diaculum* Plaister binding it on, which he let not lye on past an hour or two, but I think not so long, took the Stone off, and put it into Milk for some time; some Stones were of much stronger Vertue than others. I proposed a piece of unquench'd Lime-stone to be apply'd to see whether it might not prove as powerful, but know not whether ever it was tryed; but here on telling Mr. *Boyle* the Story of this *Indian*, he approved the Method of Cure, and said, an actual Cautery was the most certain Cure. The Poison, both of Viper and Mad-Dog (as I conceive) kill by thickning of the Blood, after the manner that Runnet congeals Milk when they make Cheese. Vipers, and all the Viperous Brood, as Rattle-Snakes, &c. that are deadly, have I believe their Poisonous Teeth Fistulous, for so I have observed that Vipers Teeth are, and the Rattle-Snakes very remarkable, and therefore they kill so very speedily by injecting the Poison through those Fistulous Teeth into the very Mass of Blood; but the Bite of Mad-Dogs is oft of long continuance before it get into and corrupt the Mass of Blood, being it sticks only to the out-sides of the Teeth, and therefore when they bite through any thickness of Cloaths, it rarely proves Mortal, the Cloaths wiping the Poison off before it come to the Flesh. A Girl, that was bit about *New-Years Day*, continued well till *Whitfontide*, when coming to see certain Friends in  
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our Parts, she fell very ill, and being a Poor Girl, they came to me: it pleased God I recovered her. Sometime after she returned to give me thanks for saving her Life, being two Persons that were bit with the same Dog, were dead, whilst she remained under Cure, and therefore she was the fullier convinced she owed her Life to me; but of this I shall give a more particular Instance by and by. But the Poisons of Vipers seems to be like the injecting of Liquors into the Veins of Creatures: Dr. *Moulin* and I made many Experiments of this Nature together, and I have made many more by my self. We once I remember injected half a Dram of Allom into the Jugular-Vein of a Dog before the *Royal Society*, (the Allom being only dissolved in a little Water) which within something less than one Minutes time was so absolutely dead, as not to have the least Convulsive Motion; and I have done the like with many other things besides Allom, but with some things it is more curdled and broken, than with others; and will differ much both as to colour and consistence. Salt-Petre kills much as quickly as Allom, but then the Blood in the Heart looks very florid, smooth, and even. I wish some Person of Observation and Leisure would prosecute these sorts of Experiments, and make Injections of the several things most used in Physick into the Veins of Creatures, both in different quantities, and into different Veins, as into the Thigh-veins of some Dogs, and Jugulars of some others, and in much lesser quantities of such things as kill suddenly; for in the little time I have spent in these sorts of Experiments, I easily perceive notable Discoveries might be made thereby: One Dog that lived became Lame and Goury; another with Quick-Silver died, in about Sixteen Weeks time, Consumptive, and I discovered Quick-Silver in the impug-nated parts of his Lungs. *Query*, Whether some Persons that have been Flux'd, or used Quick-Silver

Oyntments, and the like, and afterwards become Consumptive, owe not their Distemper to the abusive use of a most Excellent Remedy. Much after the same manner, the subtil Quick-Silver getting into the Mass of Blood by degrees, through its ponderosity settles in the Lobes of the Lungs, and causes Ulcers there. But to return : The Poison of Vipers and Mad Dogs I suppose kill by thickning of the Blood, as many Malignant Fevers also do ; in all which cases, I look on Volatil Salts to be the properest Physick, as keeping the Blood from congealing. I had a singular Instance hereof in a Gentleman of *Torkshire*, bit with a Grey-Hound on the Thursday, not three Minutes before the Dog died mad ; he bit him in several places of the Hands, as he was giving him a Remedy : The Monday following the Gentleman was very ill, and came to our Town to an Apothecary his Acquaintance, who knowing not what to do, desired my Assistance. When I came, the Gentleman could talk, but every two or three Minutes he had violent Fits, and would tell us when they were over, that his Brains worked like Birme in an Ale-Fat, and seemed to froth up at every Fit. The Apothecary had no Volatile Salt of Vipers ; so I took the Volatile Salt of Amber, and ordered him Ten Grains in Treacle-Water every half hour : He told me every Dose seemed to clear his Brain, and cool it as perfectly, as if a Basen of cold Water were poured on his Head, but it returned by degrees again : Having then a Volatile Salt by me that Vomits very well, I gave him a Dose thereof ; it worked very well, and he was very much better after it : I then ordered him to continue the Volatile Salt of Amber once every four hours, and at each two hours end, that is, betwixt, *Spec. Pleres Archonticon and Rue powder'd ana gr. 15.* whereby he was so well recovered, that within two days he would needs go home, to look after some urgent Affairs, and afterwards found himself so well, that

that he forgot to return, and perfect the course; and I heard no more of him for half a Year, when I was fetch'd one Morning to him in great hast. He had been abroad, play'd the Good-Fellow, and in his return home, having rode a great days Journey, being weary, and I suppose finding himself indisposed, he staid all Night in our Town, it being fortunately in his way. In the Morning when he should have got up, he could not stand, whereupon the Apothecary was sent for, and a Surgeon to Blood him, which was accordingly done, but he grew worse; for in this case I look upon Bleeding to be very prejudicial, as well as in most Malignant Fevers, for thereby the Spirits are diminished, and the Blood congealed the sooner. When they had done all they could, and the Symptoms still increased, they at length sent for me. I never saw Man or Creature in that Agony in all my life, that I found him in, senseless, and mad, when at best, but every Minute the fiercest shiverings ran through him, his Eyes would first roll and then set, as if ready to start out of his Head, but above all, the Swelling and Luctation at his Breast, was as if he would burst, which went off with a prodigious sigh: All this I judge the Effects of the Heart labouring to discharge itself of the stagnating Blood, and the Nervous Convulsions as consequences thereof. And I am the more confirmed in this, from what I saw in a Woman that was bit also with a Mad-Dog in the Leg, and fell ill the very day that she had paid the Chirurgeon for her Cure; and notwithstanding all that could be done, growing worse, they sent for me; I went, and found her with what is called a *Hydrophobia*: She would look earnestly after Drink or Water, and seem to desire it, but as soon as she began to drink, away it went, be it what it would, with the greatest violence she could possibly fling it. I gave her the Vomit hereafter and also before mentioned, but she got but little of it down, and I had no more with me; nevertheless

it so brought her to her self, that she could answer Questions, and I asked her, whether she was afraid of the Drink and Water, when she flung the Cups in that violent manner from her? She said, No; but when she offered to drink, her Breast and Heart would not let her. I asked, whether through any Aversion or Fear? She said, No, she was very Thirsty; but when she offered to drink, it struck to her Heart, and stopped her Breath. That is, as I apprehend, the cold Drink passing down the Throat struck a chills in the Blood, and made it readier to stagnate: besides the very act of Drinking, hindring the free breathing, conducted also much thereto; and therefore the Heart was so suddenly oppress'd, that she could not forbear flinging away whatever she had in her Hand. She complained also of a great rigour and stiffness or straitness of the Muscles of her Breast, so that possibly the Spirituous Liquor that flows in the *Genus Nervosum* may be congealed as well as the Blood; or the same Effects may be supposed notwithstanding to be the result of the condensed Blood clogging both the Heart and Lungs, so that the Breast may seem to be straitned therewith. The same I judge to be the cause of all the violent Luxations in this Gentleman, whose Fingers I looked on, and found the places where he had formerly been bit, turned blackish, and much inflamed about them, which confirmed me in my sentiment, that it was a relapse of his former Distemper, that is, of the Bite of the Mad-Dog. I told them, if any thing in the World would save his Life, I judged it must be the former Vomit of Volatile Salts; they could not tell what to do, nevertheless such is the Malignancy of the World, that as soon as it was given, they ran away and left me, saying, he was now certainly a dead Man, to have a Vomit given in that condition. Nevertheless it pleased God that he shortly after cried, *This Fellow in the Black has done me good*, and after the first Vomit, came to to himself,

himself, as to know us all. I vomited him every other day with this Vomit for three times, and made him in the Interim to take Volatile Salt of Amber, and the aforesaid Pouders, and to wash his Hands, and Sores in a strong Salt Brine; to drink Posset-drink with Sage and Rue, and by this course, and the Blessing of God, his Life was saved, and he perfectly cured, for it is now four Years since, and he had had no Relapse. I have cured several others by the same Method. Coll. *Spencer*, the Secretary of State in *Virginia*, a very Serious and Ingenious Gentleman, told me, that his Servant brought him word once that a Sow having farrow'd, a Rattle-Snake was got into the Den, and had kill'd the Piggs. The Colonel went to see the Snake, which they said was still coyl'd in the Den; there followed them two or three Mungrel Curs, and they set one of the Dogs at the Snake, which was too quick for the Dog, and snapt him by the Nose, whereupon he set a howling, and ran immediately into the adjacent River, and died very shortly after. Another of the Dogs upon the like attempt was bit by the Snake also, and fell a howling, and froathing, and rumbling; but being he died not so soon as the other Dog did, they fetch'd some of the Herb which they call Dittany, as having a great Traditionary Virtue for the Cure of Poisons: they pounded it, and adding a little Water, express'd the Juice, and gave the Dog frequently thereof, nevertheless he died within a day or two. The howling of the Dogs he supposed gave notice to the Sow, and made her come furiously brisling, and run immediately into her Den; but being likewise bit by the Snake, she set up a terrible Squeak, and ran also into the River, and there dyed.

A Gentlewoman, that was a notable Female Doctress, told me, that a Neighbour being bit by a Rattle-Snake, swelled excessively; some days afterwards she was sent for, who found him swell'd beyond what she thought  
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it had been possible for the Skin to contain, and very Thirsty. She gave him *Oriental Bezoar* shaved, with a strong Decoction of the aforesaid Dittany, whereby she recovered the Person: To the best of my Remembrance, it was he that told me, asking him afterwards, what he felt when the Snake first bit him? He said, it seemed as if a flash of Fire had ran through his Veins.

Besides the Rattle-Snake, there is the Blowing-Snake, an absolute Species of a Viper, but larger than any that I have seen in *Europe*; it is so called, because it seems to blow, and spread its Head, and swell very much before it bite, which is very deadly. It is Remarkable there is none of their Snakes there, make any of that hissing noise that ours in *England* make, but only shoot out their Tongues, shaking them as ours do, without any noise at all; this is a short thick sort of Snake. There is another sort of deadly Snake, called the *Red Snake*; I once narrowly escaped treading on the back of one of them: They are of an ugly dark brown colour, inclining to red; their bellies are of a more dusky white, with a large streak of Vermilion Red on either side; this too is of the Viper kind, but is not so short, but its Tail is more taper and small. The *Horn-Snake* is, as they say, another sort of deadly Snake; I never saw any of them, unless once, shortly after my Arrival in that Country, which I cannot attest to be the Horn-Snake, for I could not distinctly view it, being in a Thicket of *Sumach*, it was perch'd up about two Foot high in a *Sumach* Branch, its Tail twisted about the Shrub, and about a quarter of a Yard stood bolt forward, leaning over the forked Branch thereof: I could not see the Horn, which they say it has in its front, wherewith it strikes, and if it wounds, is as deadly as the Rattle-Snake's bite. The Gentleman that was with me, told me it was a Horn-Snake; but being in haste, and on Horse-back, and the Snake in a Thicket, I could  
not

not see the Horn; but had I thought I should never have seen more of them, I should have took a little pains to have been better satisfied. This I think may not improperly be referred to the *Dart-Snakes*.

The *Black Snake*, is the largest I think of all others, but I am sure the most common; I have kill'd several of them full six Foot long, their Bite is not deemed Mortal, but it swells, and turns to a Running Sore; they feed upon Lizards, Mice, Rats, Frogs, and Toads, which I have taken out of their Bellies. I was once a Simpling in the Woods, on a fair Sun-shine day, when I saw a Snake crawling on a Tree that was fallen, and licking with its forked Tongue as it moved; I stood still to observe it, and saw it lick up small Insects and Flies, with wonderful nimbleness, catching them betwixt the Forks of its Tongue.

The *Corn-Snake*, most like the *Rattle-Snake* of all others in colour, but the Checkers are not so regular, neither has it any Rattles: They are most frequent in the Corn-Fields, and thence I suppose so called; the Bite is not so venomous as the *Black Snake's*.

The *Water-Snake*, a small Snake, I never saw any of them above a Yard long, though I have sometimes seen 40 or 50 at once; they are of an ugly dark blackish colour: They say, they are the least Venomous of any.